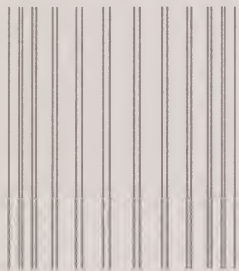


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Photography by Martin Messik

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THERE THERE THERE
THERE THERE THERE
THERE IS THERE
HERE THERE THERE
HERE THERE THERE

A black silhouette of a man in a suit and hat, running from left to right across the lower half of the page. He is in a dynamic pose, with one leg forward and arms pumping. The background behind him consists of faint, light-colored rock-like formations.

Robert Wilson—The Early Years

DALLAS PRATT

In 1965, when he was still a student of architecture at Pratt Institute, Robert Wilson was brought by a friend to my house for drinks. He was about twenty-four years old. Very courteous, neatly dressed, with nothing whatever bohemian in his appearance: one might have assumed he was preparing to enter a conservative New York architectural firm. However, he mentioned that the kind of architecture he was interested in was stage design; in fact, he had already designed an off-Broadway production, Jean-Claude van Itallie's *America Hurrah*. Although there were twenty-seven years difference in age between us, he was very amiable and arranged for me to meet several of his friends.

After he graduated from Pratt, he rented a loft on Spring Street in New York's Soho, and in 1966 invited me to several performances there in which he danced, either alone or with a partner. Here was a very different Robert Wilson from the proper young man I had met at the cocktail party! On one occasion, in an incense-scented room he danced under phosphorescent light encased in transparent red-dyed plastic. In another production, *Byrdwoman*, the performers represented chickens, bouncing on boards and pressing against the wire of a large chicken coop. Bob swooped about with lurching, half-spastic steps, clucking. In later productions he continued to fascinate audiences with these movements. He claimed that he hated doing them "but I can't seem to stop."

I was in the audience of Bob's *Theater Activity* shown at the Bleecker Street Cinema in 1967. He "papered" the audience with some of his friends, literally, since he persuaded them to sit with brown paper bags over their heads, peering through cut-out eyeholes.

Opposite: Robert Wilson dancing during the Entre' acte between Acts II and III in *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, 1974.
(Photo by Michel Biannoulatos)

He showed a film featuring repetitive and long-lasting images: waving grass, and the face of his cat, Baby. Repetitions and time drawn-out would become hallmarks of some of his future theatre pieces. I wrote to him about this:

The most striking image you have created so far, penetrating deeply into an object, was the picture of Baby on the screen. This was positively hypnotic, and so beautiful. One saw an animal as one rarely sees one The fact that it was unchanging made it possible to experience a Zen effect: one seemed to lose one's identity contemplating the image so that the subject and object became one.

Bob comes from Waco, Texas. When he was seventeen, he met a retired dancer and ballet teacher there named Byrd Hoffman. He was a stutterer, but through her program of exercises, which stressed slow and determined motions, he learned to relax. The speech defect disappeared. He began to work with children who had severe learning difficulties, using some of Byrd Hoffman's techniques and innovative ideas of his own. These ideas, given a theatrical orientation, attracted people for whom Bob started workshops for dance and theatre. He named this the Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds. Although I never joined these workshops as a "byrd," I was invited by Bob to act in his first major theatre piece, *The King of Spain*. It was to be produced in New York early in 1969 at the large but decrepit Anderson Theater, on Second Avenue and 4th Street.

Bob planned to assemble a group of people, all from very different backgrounds, in a "musty Victorian drawing-room," and within the framework of certain bizarre activities, which he would prescribe, let them "do their own thing." I was to be one of the three men, described as "elderly" or "portly," who stood, squatted or slowly circled around a games-table, playing something "that wasn't chess." Pushing a number of small cubes, triangles, and spheres of glass round the table, we were supposed to be totally oblivious to the extraordinary happenings around us. But it was hard not to glance at the grand finale, when four enormous "cat's legs" appeared from the wings and, as the byrds above the proscenium

arch frantically worked the pulleys, crossed the stage in three giant strides.

The poor old Anderson Theater! It was pretty bad in January 1969, suffering from the effects of a fire which had occurred a few nights before we were due to open. Of course, we opened and



The Grand finale of *The King of Spain*, showing the enormous cat's feet in the 1969 New York production. (Photo by Martin Bough)

closed so fast that there was hardly time to worry about the decor. And Bob declared that its decayed look and crummy interior was like an extension of his musty drawing-room, and therefore a perfect setting for *The King of Spain*.

Now, there was nothing Spanish or historical about the play, so why the title? It seems that when Bob was in the second grade his teacher by the name of Miss Weebush asked the children what they would like to be when they grew up. Before she reached Bob, she found she had a future nurse, fireman, and housewife in her class. Bob said he'd like to be the king of Spain. Now *this* child's got problems said Miss Weebush, and wrote this on his report card. His mother got the report card to puzzle over, but Bob, in the end, got the king of Spain.

The next Wilson production, *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, thanks to the interest of Harvey Lichtenstein, director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, was staged in that spacious house. Since Bob still wanted the game “that wasn’t chess” to be the imperturbable center around which his fantasies revolved, at least in the first part of the play, he invited the three players, Carroll Dunn, George Klauber, and myself, to perform again in *Freud*. Bob had noticed a Freud look-alike in Grand Central Station. He pursued and stopped this elderly person, who turned out to be a retired carpenter, Michel Sondak, and asked him point-blank to play the role of Freud in his new play. Nervously declining, Mr. Sondak hurried on, but Bob cornered him in a cafeteria and extracted his telephone number. The ex-carpenter soon found himself rehearsing with Bob’s other discoveries: artists, students, suburban housewives, black children, white children, a chambermaid, and a psychiatrist (myself). The play had very little to say about Freud, but the action was so delightfully lunatic that it might well have been subtitled “Fifty characters in search of a psychoanalyst.” Still, there was nothing haphazard about it; every movement, every line, was rehearsed over and over again, until, timed to the second, it satisfied our meticulous director.

The action in Bob’s early plays alternated between immobility and sudden bursts of speech, screams and rapid movement. This movement might be a whirling dance, as performed in *Freud* by the much padded “Heavyman” (Kenneth King), and in later plays by Andy de Groat. Andy could spin continuously for an hour without dizziness, and so fast that at times his body became a blur.

But the big extravaganza in *Freud* was Bob’s famous Mammy Dance. Thirty of us were chosen, myself included, regardless of age, sex, or color, to take part in this caper. In ‘blackface,’ topped by bandanas and wearing red dresses enormously padded up front and down behind, it was impossible except by voice and the occasional beard to tell the girls from the boys. When the first strains of the “Blue Danube Waltz” were heard, the stage was inundated by the



One of 300 numbered and signed lithographs by Robert Wilson,
after an engraving by William Blake.

mammy throng, solemn-faced, shaking their upraised hands, turning right, turning left, bowing—then up! with the bustle. “One, two, three; *one*, two, three” intoned a voice. The audience roared, and we found ourselves the hit of the show.



Kenneth King (*left*) the “Heavyman,” whirling and Sheryl Sutton, seated with a raven on her wrist, in *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*. (Photo by Martin Bough)

Although my more sedate friends refuse to believe it, yes, I was a mammy and shuffled and swayed on the stage of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It was fun and it was funny. Who could ask for anything more? Well, one *could* ask for critical recognition, but from *Freud* the critics stayed away in droves. Honorable exceptions were two who came from the *Village Voice*; they called the play “one of the major stage works of the decade” and Bob a “genius.”

There were only four performances: two in December 1969, and two in May 1970. It wasn’t until *Deafman Glance*, played at the Academy of Music in 1971, that the American critics began to take notice. Much of the content of *Deafman* was the result of Bob’s discovery of Raymond Andrews, a black lad who was deaf and spoke only in inarticulate sounds. Bob, challenged as always by the

impossible, centered the show around Raymond, his imaginative drawings, and his sounds. He achieved, according to Martin Gold in *Variety*, “A work of genius, all marvellous to behold.”

Later in the year the play was produced in France, and Bob’s “conquest of Europe” began. I was at the opening in Paris. Unlike the American audience, which laughed at the funny bits (both on and off the stage Bob has a great sense of humor), the French maintained a reverent silence. The French critics raved even more than the American. Louis Aragon, the distinguished man of letters, declared, “I have never seen anything more beautiful in the world.”

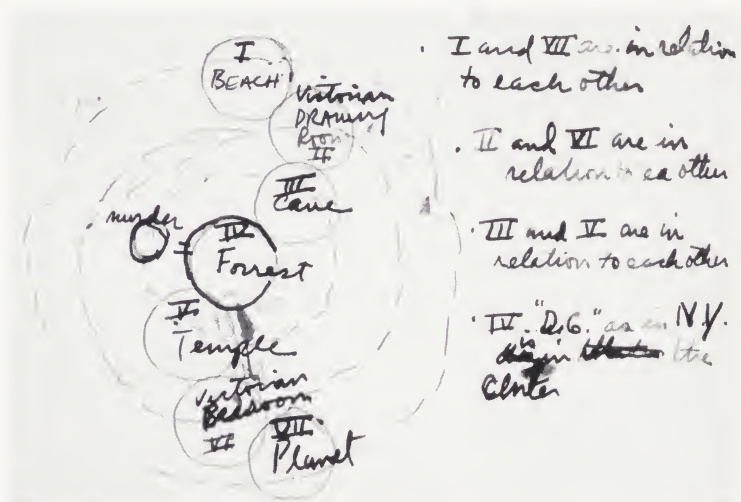
In July 1973, Bob wrote me from his house in British Columbia, saying he was working on a new play “in 7 acts and 12 hours long.” It was to be called *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*. He enclosed a diagram showing how the seven acts related to one another. It was to incorporate scenes from *Freud* and *Deafman*, and would open in Copenhagen. He added, “I’m hoping that you might be able to come either as audience or performer . . . it would be great if you could be there for the opening.”

So I flew to Denmark in September. I arrived during a rehearsal in the splendid white, red, and gold setting of the Det Ny Theatre. Bob was coaching an elderly lady who turned out to be his grandmother, Alma Hamilton, aged eighty-seven. “Grandmother.” “Yes, Bob.” “Walk downstage right, stand facing the audience, and let out with two screams.” Mrs. Hamilton produced a surprising volume of sound. Satisfied with his grandmother’s ability as a screamer, he took us out to lunch. Said Mrs. Hamilton, “Who would have thought I’d be acting in Copenhagen when I ought to be at home in Waco. But when Bob wants a thing he’s very determined.”

That determination had collected over one hundred people for his play. Some were veteran byrds, but many were eager young Danish volunteers who had answered a newspaper appeal for help. I feared that my mammy routine might be a drag on this lively group of young Danes, so I thankfully settled for the “talk-on” role of the telephone voice of the Russian dictator. “This is Joseph Stalin!” I

boomed. Then I joined the audience to watch, wide awake most of the time, the twelve-hour-long show.

The most riveting performance was that of Sheryl Sutton, a black actress who was repeating her role of Byrdwoman from *Deafman*. A



Wilson's diagram of the seven acts of *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* in a letter to the author, July 4, 1973.

rigid, hieratic figure, she sits immobile during the whole of the first act with a raven on her wrist. Later she is seen with a little boy and girl. She slowly draws on a long pair of black gloves. Pouring out some milk, she gives it to the boy. It's a tender gesture of care. Then, she takes up a knife and very slowly slides it into his body. Like a priestess performing a ritual, she repeats this with the girl, cradling them both as they fall without a sound. Another boy, a little older, enters from the left, and cries out. The cry, forlorn, insistent, is repeated as many as forty times. Then the Byrdwoman glides towards him, and covers his eyes with her gloved hand. Her hand moves downward to his mouth and the cry is cut off.

Since the early 1970s, Bob's extraordinary success abroad (operas at La Scala, ballet in Paris, productions in Iran, Japan, and through-

out Europe) have kept him continually on the move. Old New York friends have seen very little of him. But recently our mutual interest in finding a home in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia for his immense archive at the Byrd Hoffman Foundation and for my own small collection of Wilsoniana, brought us together for a few days. The passage of two decades had changed him remarkably little in appearance. Nor had fame, and the term “genius” which reverberates after each new production, altered his gentle, almost diffident manner, nor quelled his still-boyish enthusiasms. He talked about his recent work, the D’Annunzio-Debussy *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*, which was being performed by the corps de ballet of the Paris Opéra, and of the appreciation in Hamburg for his *Parzival*, and especially for his protégé and collaborator Christopher Knowles’s interpretation of the title role.

“And what do you have in mind for the future?” I asked.

Bob took a couple of pieces of blank paper from my desk and gazed reflectively at them. “*King Lear*,” he said. “I read and re-read it. And I’d look for a great comedian to play that role. Why? Because only the finest actors excel in comedy—tragedy is easier. And Lear should handle the body of Cordelia as if it were so very light—as light as paper.”

And suddenly the two sheets of paper were floating, protected for a moment by an old man’s fumbling hands, then slipping away, down, down, becoming a white body, Cordelia . . .

Working with Robert Wilson

MAITA DI NISCEMI

I first met Robert Wilson during a snowstorm in February 1976. Friends had told me that Wilson would be joining us at the ballet and since Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi, my cousin and the Artistic Director of Rome's Teatro dell'Opera, had long ago alerted me to the fact that "the only real genius now working in the American theatre is a madman from Texas." I expected a long-haired eccentric to emerge from the storm. Wilson's dress and demeanor could not have been more disconcertingly conservative.

Jerome Robbins's "dances at a gathering" was on the program that night and at the ballet's conclusion, when "the man in brown" with his back to audience bent and touched the earth, Wilson looked at me over his glasses and said "someday I'm going to make a large work around that gesture."

1976 was the year of the Robert Wilson–Philip Glass collaborative effort *Einstein on the Beach* and, having attended the Westbeth run through in May, I found myself a member of the benefit committee which helped sell out the house when *Einstein* was presented in the Metropolitan Opera house in November.

In 1977, Robert Wilson asked me if I would be interested in attending the rehearsals of his next work, *I Was Sitting on My Patio This Guy Appeared I Thought I Was Hallucinating*. Fascinated by the play's oblique approach to the American vernacular, I went every day, as did Edwin Denby, the great dance critic. By the end of 1977, I was sufficiently friendly with Wilson to be invited to a dinner given in his honor. Here he pulled a newspaper photograph out of his pocket and asked me "What do you know about this?" It was a telephoto taken illegally of Rudolph Hess in Spandau prison on his eighty-second birthday in May 1976. At the time of the picture's publication, I had been so struck by the desolate blankness of the old

man's face and stance that I had clipped the photo from *The New York Times* and promptly lost it. Wilson asked me if I would be interested in running down facts about Hess for him to be used in his next big piece. So I sent him several highly illustrated letters while he was touring Europe with the *Patio* company in the spring of 1978. That summer he asked me to think about evolving speeches for Hess and Mrs. Hess. I received credit for this dialogue in the program when *Death Destruction and Detroit* was performed by Berlin's Shaubühne theatre in February 1979.

My trip to Berlin for the opening of *Death Destruction and Detroit* was crucial to my future efforts on behalf of Robert Wilson's theatre pieces. Having arrived bearing twelve dozen iridescent black feathers to be used in an Elizabethan ruff and two large packages of dark blue gels, I found myself swallowed by a production that incorporated much of my research as well as my writing. I was astounded and delighted to see how much use Wilson had found for my discoveries. It was like being a lens among lenses, part of a multilayered burning glass capable of transforming anecdote into art.

After *Death Destruction and Detroit*, I stayed on in Paris where Robert Wilson was starting to think about a truly epic project. Who would be a good lynch pin character in a new epic standing as Hess had in the German production? What about Mathew Brady? (Robert Wilson had used a Civil War soldier in *A Letter for Queen Victoria* and, in the wake of Susan Sontag's treatise, photography was very much on everyone's mind.) So I joined the American Library in Paris and plunged into Carl Sandberg's *Lincoln* and Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee*. These multivolumed biographies are ubiquitous in the English language libraries of Europe, and in the following years I had reason to consult them in Munich, Freiburg, and Rome. Actually, Sandberg's work is close to being a novel (and a great novel too), and it was in it, among the eulogies he recorded as pronounced after Lincoln's death, that I happened upon the phrase, "a tree is best measured when it is down." Never did it enter my mind that this saying, which I taped up on Bob's

study wall in February 1979, would become the subtitle and the spine of a twelve-hour opera.

Now is perhaps the time to address the question of the way Robert Wilson works on his original pieces. His method is consist-



Robert Wilson in *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, 1974.

ent and always begins with tiny sketches in one of the ever present black notebooks he carries everywhere with him. Like Edison (about whom Wilson constructed a theatre piece in 1979) and Henry Ford, Robert Wilson draws before he writes. He will put up a drawing for every scene or interlude in the work under construction. Then below the initial drawing, phrases, objects, and background pieces are taped to the wall so that he may evolve a working script to bring to the actors. Nothing is permanent in Wilson's

work, nothing is carved in stone. His collaborators are encouraged to bring in contributions, and his co-writers keep writing until, and sometimes after, the opening night. I, for instance, was still giving the long suffering actors lines when *Edison*, which has already played in Lyons and Milan, opened in Paris. I also added Alcmena's aria "Sole occidere et redire possunt" (Suns rise and set) to the libretto of the Fifth Act of *the CIVIL warS*, *a tree is best measured when it is down*, between the Rome and Amsterdam productions of that opera.

Wilson's universe is a totally controlled environment. Every effect is studied, every movement is counted and checked to the second on stopwatches. A movement script for every scene is encoded by Wilson's assistants so that the actors can find their freedom with an absolutely structured world. How this world is built can be found in Wilson's drawings, notes, and working script. The effect of its creation is recorded in the reaction of audience and critics. But the magical fulfillment of the completed work can only be contemplated. Oh, there are clues to how Wilson creates his wonders. His often reiterated conviction that not only should script and movement be considered separately from each other, but that light itself must be regarded as a major "character" has been illustrated in each work throughout his career. Wilson's fanaticism about lighting has only increased with the passage of time as have the means at his command. It seems unthinkable that a director would lock a Berlin audience out of preview performances, or spend four hours in Rome perfecting an opening sequence of lighting cues, but I have seen Wilson do just that, and more. What's more he was right to do so. In a strange way Wilson's greatest achievement is not what is presented on stage, but what audiences remember after the performance—so that beginnings and ends are of capital importance in his theatre. What do I, his co-worker, remember best of the Dutch section of *the CIVIL warS*? The lighting of the opening tableau that showed a polar bear beside a frozen Dutch canal and the very end of the performance when a little boy in a field of red tulips recited the

events of his school day. Not that we did not present an evening full of wonders including dwarfs and giants, William the Silent, Queen Wilhelmina, and Mata Hari springing in full hootchy-kootch regalia from a haystack to recite a speech written by me to Wilson's



A scene from *Death Destruction and Detroit*, performed at the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer, Berlin, 1979, the first Wilson production to use a cast of professional actors. (Photo by Ruth Walz)

specifications, but these two simple moments were those that seem to me to best exemplify the magical capabilities of an artist able to achieve a newer and clearer focus of actual, theatrical, and historical time.

Historical time was my province in Wilson's world, and my role was that of truffle hound. As such while working on the pre-text of *the CIVIL warS, a tree is best measured when it is down*, I came up with two extraordinary documents. One of which, a letter written by Robert E. Lee to his wife during the 1830s, described twenty-three little girls "all dressed up in their white frocks and pantalets, their hair plaited and tied up with ribbons, running and chasing each

other in all directions," who had presented him near Saint Louis, Missouri, with "the prettiest sight I have seen in the West and perhaps in my life." This letter formed the textual spine of what was to be Act III, Scene C, of the complete five-act *the CIVIL warS*. I followed it as far as Freiburg where at the skeleton run through of the whole work it passed into the power of the Japanese, who had sent a delegation to Germany to pick out the more finished scenes. Unfortunately, Act III, Scene C, never made it to production. It remains to this day one of my *CIVIL warS* favorites, centered as it is upon the death of Robert E. Lee and punctuated by twenty-four mini-ballerinas, a hospital ward full of cartoon Lincolns, and Marie Curie's farewell letter to her dead husband. This touching document was read during the Freiburg run-through by Hildegard Behrens, whose liltingly accented French brought tears to many eyes. As one of Robert Wilson's collaborators, I regret to this day not having been able to see this lovely piece completed.

The second text I found had been written by William E. Hatcher, a baptist minister who saw Robert E. Lee pass his gate in a rainstorm after surrendering the army of Northern Virginia to General Grant at the Village of Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. As early as 1980 Robert Wilson had incorporated the minister's musings into a speech for Lee himself to be spoken while floating in zero gravity behind the porthole of a spaceship. Robert E. Lee was always thought of as the protagonist of Act V of *the CIVIL warS* in which he was joined by Mrs. Lincoln as a girl and Hercules, the legendary founder of the Olympic games (for it must never be forgotten that the whole *the CIVIL warS* project was conceived in terms of the 1984 Olympic Games at Los Angeles and that all the production's sets and models were built with the huge one-hundred meter wide stage of the Shrine Auditorium in mind). As the librettist and because this Act was to be produced in Rome as a full-sized wholly orchestrated opera, I suggested the inclusion in the cast of Garibaldi, Lee's exact contemporary. (They were both born in 1807 and were two years older than Lincoln who appears in Act V's

prologue as a fifteen-foot tall singing puppet and in the Opera proper as a man-sized hero.) The other major figures to be dealt with were a snow owl, an earth mother, and Alcmene, the mother of Hercules.

At the first general workshop for the entire *the CIVIL warS, a tree is best measured when it is down* project, which was held in Munich in August of 1981, Robert Wilson taped four drawings to the wall to represent the fifth act. These showed a field, two bridges, a spaceship viewed from the side, a spaceship viewed from below; by the time the Rome section was complete these drawings had become almost a hundred. (Robert Wilson drew upwards of six hundred large black and white studies to illustrate the play of light and mass throughout the complete fifteen scene opera). Also available in Munich was Wilson's speech for General Lee which dated from 1980 as did one he had written for Mrs. Lincoln. In the spring of 1983, I worked on the libretto for the Rome section adapting Seneca's Hercules plays and Garibaldi's oratory to serve our purpose. Since Wilson was in Japan I reviewed the text with Philip Glass who suggested that I bring more to our first Roman workshop than I thought would be needed. For twelve days, in July 1983, a dozen people working under the glass dome of an unairconditioned exhibition hall on the Via Nazionale pinned down the action script for a cast of five principles singers, two actors, eight choristers, and thirty-three dancers. For the first time the text was spoken and every gesture was worked out in beats meticulously noted by Robert Wilson's assistant Gregor Leschig in a log he evolved specially for this project. Clock-computer in hand, Philip Glass sat in the rehearsals taking notes and counting movements and then went to his summer home in Nova Scotia to write the music. Whole sections of the script were cut, moved, or changed without ever having been sung. Garibaldi's aria ended up being four times longer in July than it was in May.

If the Opera singers had been astonished to be asked to merely move through their roles, they were even more surprised when in

February 1984 the final rehearsal period began, and they realized that everything was already in place. The score had been written not just to fit the text, but to accommodate the prefixed movements. The cadences of three languages, Latin, Italian, and English,



Wilson in a Rome Opera workshop for Act III, scene A, of
the CIVIL warS.

had been respected, the choreography had been completed. Everything was there in Leschig's notebooks so that the last month of rehearsal could be devoted to fine tuning—to the smoothing of movement, the orchestration of speech and song, the refining of notes and phrases. To everything except interpretation.

It is always a pleasure to see how carefully Robert Wilson steers performers away from nineteenth-century demonstrative techniques, making them step back, pause, create space around their characters. Wilson, like the artists of the baroque theatre, maintains an open distance between the stage and the audience so that the individual viewer can see, understand, and interpret the work pre-



Tableaux from the Dutch portion, Act I, Scene B, of *the CIVIL warS*.
(Photo by Leo Van Velzen)

sented. Because he trusts the value of his vision, Wilson enjoys catching the onlooker off balance. His often repeated remark that a candelabra becomes somehow different when seen placed on a rock rather than a console can stand as a key to much of his work. Selection is a key element. I know because many of the ideas which I have submitted for various projects have been changed or discarded; several poems of mine were inserted into the production script of *Edison* only to be replaced by more suitable ones in production. An aria written in 1985 for *Death Destruction and Detroit II* about the "mouse tower" that stands on an island in the Rhine River was distilled into a ten-second vision of a huge white rat. At any time a collaborator may be asked, as with the Garibaldi aria, to expand or contract his contribution. The choice, the control, is always Wilson's. The world of his theatre is *his* world and all his scripts, sketches, drawings, and collaborations are but clues to the construction of that world, to the clarification of that vision. Working with Robert Wilson entails a great deal of trust, a fascination with both mystery and clarity and a willingness to step through illusion into the working theatre world. The documents which map the evolution of Wilson's creations are doubly precious because they will allow future students to follow the amalgamative process by which this great artist takes and transforms the means at hand into a world of his own and a portrait of our times. To study the works of Robert Wilson is to begin to understand the answer to Alonso's question in Act V, Scene 1, of *The Tempest*. "But how should Prospero be living and be here?"

At the end of the Rome section of *the CIVIL warS*, *a tree is best measured when it is down*, Hercules stands alone on the stage. He is wearing the skin of the lion which was lying beneath a tree at the whole opera's very beginning. He looks out at the audience and then kneels in silence to touch the earth while a chorus of animal voices greet his gesture.

Painting Finnegans Wake

MARJORIE WINDUST HALPER

My husband, the late Nathan Halper, used to joke that the reason we got married was entirely because of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. When we met I was an artist who was not very literarily inclined, and I had no idea that he was a passionate Joycean. Now, most Joyceans are academics, but Nathan never wanted to teach; he was primarily a scholar and writer. I guess we each were very lopsided people, but we complemented one another in our interests.

My father was an English violinist *manqué*, and my mother was an American singing teacher. We three children, two boys and myself, a girl in the middle, were all born in Paris, France. My parents separated when I was six years old, and my mother had custody of us. She cared nothing for the education of a girl and lavished much of her energies on educating my two brothers. My education was very bad, nothing at all until I was nine years old, then any old school of no consequence in France, England, and America was good enough for me. Mother brought us to Manhattan, her native city, when I was twelve years old.

When I was seventeen, we discovered the art colony at Provincetown, Massachusetts, and from then on spent summers there. I studied art as compensatory activity for which I showed talent. In 1930 my mother bought a house on the bay in Provincetown with the most beautiful view imaginable. None of us had any knowledge of winter storms and the damage they inflicted on the waterfront, but we soon learned it would keep us poor. Nevertheless, we were addicted to that beautiful view.

I inherited the house during the war and found myself renting parts of it to a good number of psychoanalysts who summered in Provincetown. Then after my mother's death, the director of the William

Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry persuaded me to be analyzed by one of their analysts who was not in the armed services.

In this way I was introduced to the ideas of Freud. Joyce used Freud's ideas, of course, and these were very interesting to an artist.

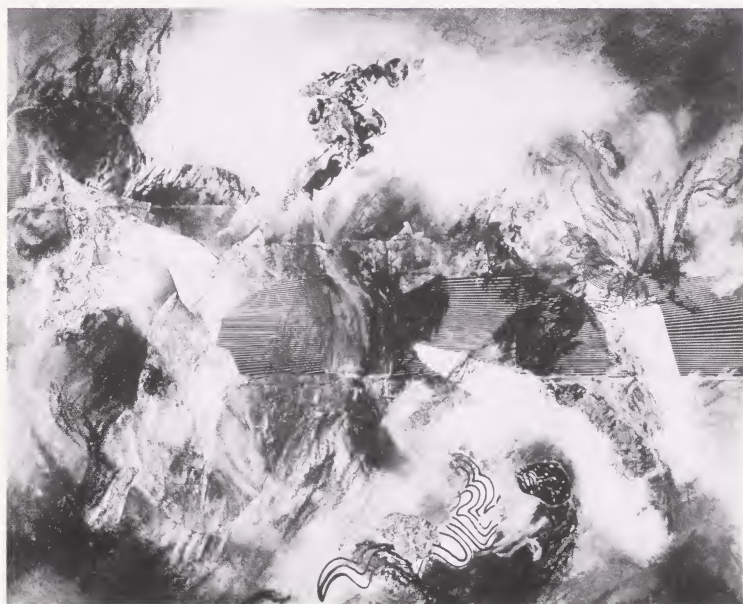


"Grampupus is fallen down but grinny sprids the boord . . ."; pastel, 1986. Passages from *Finnegans Wake* suggest subjects to Marjorie Windust Halper for her paintings.

One of the main things I came to understand about humans is that we all have patterns of behavior, some of them completely unconscious, which control our behavior, even though sometimes they are harmful to our health or to the smooth conduct of our daily lives. The patterns of behavior seemed to me to have a connection with themes in the arts. Since I was aware of themes in music, especially the Wagner operas, I began looking for possible themes in other branches of the arts. Great visual art certainly uses rhythms and pat-

terns and themes of color, form, and organization of coherent space arrangements, whether the art is realistic or abstract.

Being woefully deficient in my literary education, I still felt that literature also had themes, though these were more hidden to me



"This is the Willingdone on his same white harse . . ."; collage and pastel, 1980.

than themes in the visual arts. Nevertheless, I detected in James Joyce's short stories, which I had read, that there seemed to be, though well disguised in naturalism, themes to be discovered. Joyce's *Ulysses* I could not fathom much and parts bored me.

Then during World War II another book by Joyce appeared, *Finnegans Wake*. It was much discussed at the time. In Wellfleet, a neighboring town, the great critic Edmund Wilson, who as a friend of friends, had written, I believe in *The New Yorker*, a critique of *Finnegans Wake* and pronounced it a great book.

A steady stream of men were returning from the War during the summer of 1947. I remember that I often asked the more intelligent ones what this strange book was all about. It seemed unintelligible to me and to others. There had been discussions among artists



Marjorie Windust Halper in her studio in Provincetown, July 1988.

about communication and intelligibility in painting because of the appearance in New York art galleries of abstract art, and there were teachers of art who were teaching the new abstract art, and in fact I had begun to study with one of them at the Art Students League of New York—Vaclav Vytlacil, who had himself studied in Munich with the legendary Hans Hofmann. But none of those I asked about *Finnegans Wake* could give me much more explanation than that it was about “time-space” and other vague concepts.

Then an analyst introduced me to Nathan Halper, still in uniform of the Armed Forces, Persian Gulf Command. He was on his

way to New York and said he would look me up when I returned to New York. On our second date he called to take me to the movies. Knowing that he was a writer, I happened to ask him if he knew anything about this strange new book. He looked very surprised



“So her grace o’ malice kidsnapped up the jimny Tristopher...”;
pastel, 1982.

and then asked me if I really wanted to know. When I said, “Yes, indeed, I want to know,” he said, “Well, do sit down.” And then he proceeded to talk for three hours, and we never went to that movie.

He explained that it was carefully constructed on themes based on Freud, Vico, and many others. My future husband told me about Finnegan who falls off a ladder and dies. At his Wake, he is accidentally splashed with whisky, or the Elixir of Life, which revives him, and that he embodies the eternal fall and resurrection of man. Then he explained how he turned into HCE, standing for Here Comes Everybody, the central figure of the book. HCE dreams the dream of life, and he is the embodiment of the life-giving principal. Then he told me of Anna Livia Plurabelle, the wife and symbol of

female creativity, the running water, the eternal river of life who later becomes the daughter who will in turn become the wife. He further explained the duality of the twin sons, Shem and Shaun: Shem being the introvert but creative side of man, presenting the



“And the prankquean went for her forty years’ walk in
Tourlemonde...”; pastel, 1982.

eternal change; while Shaun, being the extrovert, the successful side of man who steals the creativity of Shem and presents it to the world as his own. Nathan said that every human being in the book possessed these various characteristics of the twins which flow within them constantly. These characters comprised the family of Man. Further, he explained other parts unintelligible to me. I could see that one had to be very literarily knowledgeable to understand *Finnegans Wake*.

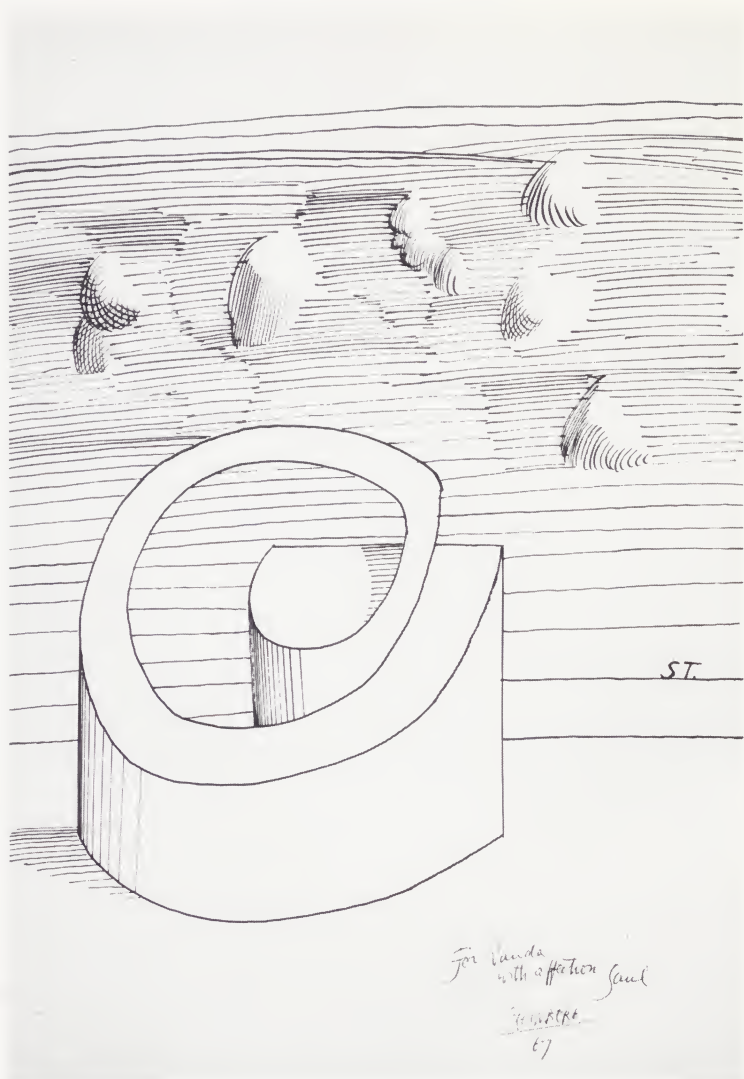
After hearing about *Finnegans Wake* for thirty-five years of marriage, I still find too much of it that is very difficult to fathom. Even

Joyceans do. Joyce is supposed to have joked that *Finnegans Wake* would keep critics busy deciphering for three hundred years.

At first after we were married I did not consider using *Finnegans Wake* as subject matter for my painting, but it seems I was unconsciously influenced by it. Nathan took me to Europe in 1960 on a visit. At the British Museum's Hall of Elgin Marbles in London, I remember feeling a distinct thump in my chest as I entered the hall and saw what looked like a frieze of humans and animals flowing into one another. I began to paint scenes of humans and animals flowing into one another in silhouetted masses, and this caused some Joyceans and critics to see a correlation between the flow of themes and principles in *Finnegans Wake* and the themes in my compositions. Then, after a while, maybe several years later, some of the less dense parts of the book suggested themselves to me as subjects to be painted.

In my painting I've tried to keep some of the sense of Joyce's layers of meaning, breaking up and recombining visual elements to highlight meaning and action, and thus trying to parallel some of Joyce's inventiveness with language. Also, Joyce thought his book very funny, because he had a great deal of fun during the seventeen years he took to compose it. So I've tried to keep a sense of fun also.

In addition, parts of *Finnegans Wake* are very visual, and it is rhythmic and poetic, as anyone knows who has heard the recording of Joyce himself reading the Anna Livia Plurabelle section. "Well, you know or don't you kenet it or haven't I told you every telling has a taling and thats the he and the she of it. Look, Look, the dusk is growing! My branches lofty are taking root . . ."



"The Labyrinth"; Saul Steinberg's original pen and ink drawing created for Paul Tillich's *My Search for Absolutes*, 1967. (Anshen gift)

Our Growing Collections

KENNETH A. LOHF

Anshen gift. Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen has presented the original pen and ink drawing by Saul Steinberg, "The Labyrinth," which was published in Paul Tillich's *My Search for Absolutes*, 1967; the volume was part of the Credo Perspectives series, founded and edited by Dr. Anshen and published by Simon and Schuster. The impressive drawing, affectionately inscribed to Dr. Anshen by the artist, measures 18¹/₄ by 12¹/₂ inches, and is one of seventeen drawings done by Steinberg for the Tillich book. Dr. Anshen in her introductory essay to the published volume describes her choice of Steinberg to comment on the text by Tillich: "The discursive language of Tillich's philosophical theology wedded to the non-discursive language of Steinberg's art presents with eloquence and conviction the dual character of transcendence and is the answer to the question: 'Why is an artist invited to comment on a theologian?'"

Bergel gift. Mrs. Sylvia C. Bergel has presented the library and papers of her late husband, Professor Lienhard Bergel, who taught comparative literature at Rutgers University, Queens College, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York from 1931 until his retirement in 1974. The collection includes files of correspondence and manuscripts of lectures and writings on literary, aesthetic, and cultural matters, especially his writings on the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce. Of special importance are the letters in the papers to Professor Bergel from Croce, Thomas Mann, Salvatore Quasimodo, and René Wellek, among numerous others.

Butcher gift. Professor Philip Butcher (Ph.D., 1956) has donated, for addition to the collection that he has established, 129 rare and scarce monographs, pamphlets, newspapers, and other printed material relating to the history, literature, and language of blacks in America. While most of the items were published from the 1940s through the 1970s, there are several important works in Professor Butcher's gift dealing with politics and race relations which date from the first decade of the century.

Cardozo gift. In a recent gift, Mr. Michael H. Cardozo has added to the Benjamin N. Cardozo Papers a group of seven letters written by the Supreme Court Justice to various relatives from 1930 to 1935. Justice Cardozo writes at length in the letters, numbering some twenty-one pages, about various law schools and legal education, as well as his own experiences as a student and other family matters.

Chase gift. Mrs. Frances Walker Chase has presented, for addition to the collection of her late husband, Professor Richard Volney Chase (Ph.D., 1946), a first edition of Robert Lowell's *Lord Weary's Castle*, published in 1946 by Harcourt, Brace. The copy of the author's second book of poems, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, is autographed by the author on the half-title.

Congdon gift. Mr. Don Congdon has established a collection of papers of the literary agency, Don Congdon Associates, Inc., which he founded in 1983. The initial gift comprised some 11,400 items of correspondence, manuscripts, memoranda, and contracts documenting the editing and publishing, serial rights, dramatic rights, foreign rights, and copyright of numerous American and English books. Included are extensive files of letters and contracts pertaining to Ray Bradbury, Lillian Hellman, William Manchester, William L. Shirer, William Styron, and François Truffaut.

Davis gift. The collection of chess books formed by the late Royal Stanton Davis (M.D., 1932) has been presented in his memory by his widow Mrs. Marian Davis. Comprising 107 volumes, nearly five hundred issues of periodicals, and two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings of chess plays, the collection is strong in works published at the end of the nineteenth and during the early decades of the twentieth centuries.

Goodrich gift. Nearly 12,000 manuscripts and pieces of correspondence have been added to the papers of the late Professor L. Carington Goodrich (A.M., 1927; Ph.D., 1934) by his widow Mrs. Anne Goodrich. In addition to letters written to him by Pearl S.

Buck, Norman Cousins, and H. H. Kung, there are extensive correspondence and subject files relating to his studies and researches on various aspects of the Far East, such as printing, the arts, medicine, technology, education and missions, and family histories.

Haverstick gift. Shortly after the conclusion of the exhibition at the Grolier Club commemorating the 125th anniversary of the birth of Edith Wharton, Mrs. Iola Haverstick (A.B., 1946, B.), who organized the exhibition and lent numerous rarities to it, presented to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library her entire Wharton collection, comprising American and English first editions, autograph letters, inscribed photographs, and books about the novelist, whose writings, much influenced by Henry James, are best known for the fictional studies of the tragedies and ironies in the lives of members of middle class and aristocratic New York society at the end of the nineteenth and in the early decades of the twentieth centuries. Among the New York first editions presented by Mrs. Haverstick are several important association books and copies in the original dust jackets: *The Fruit of the Tree*, 1907, in the original pictorial dust jacket illustrated by Alonzo Kimball; *Artemis to Actaeon*, 1909, the only known copy in the dust jacket; *Ethan Frome*, 1911, the Paul Lemperry copy; *The Custom of the Country*, 1913, inscribed by F. Scott Fitzgerald to the writer Holger Lundberg; and an exceptional copy of *The Age of Innocence*, 1920, inscribed by Edith Wharton "With admiration & gratitude to Katharine Cornell whose art has given new life to the wistful ghost of Ellen Olenska." Of the three autograph letters in the collection, the most important is the one written to Robert Minturn on March 4, 1907, in which Wharton mentions the publication of *Madame de Treymes*, the completion of *The Fruit of the Tree*, and the coming visit of Henry James. Finally, there is a photograph, inscribed for Katharine Cornell in September, 1928, of the Edward May oil portrait of Wharton at the age of five.

Holmes gift. Mr. David J. Holmes has donated two letters written by President Frederick A. P. Barnard, one to Eugene T. Gardner, dated

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE



EDITH WHARTON

Original pictorial dust jacket illustrated by Alonzo Kimball for the
1907 New York edition. (Haverstick gift)

with admiration & gratitude
to Katherine Cornell,
whose art has given new life
to the mistful ghost of
Ellen Alenska.

Edith Wharton

July, 1929.

Edith Wharton's inscription to Katherine Cornell in *The Age of Innocence*. (Haverstick gift)

May 11, 1886, and the second to Professor A. C. Twining, dated September 16, 1874, pertaining to the School of Mines and several personal matters.

Hoptner gift. Mrs. Harriett S. Hoptner (M.S., 1961) has donated a poster by Ben Shahn which he designed on behalf of the 1964 presidential election campaign of Lyndon B. Johnson; the copy presented, number 52 of five hundred copies, is also autographed by the artist alongside the caricature of Barry Goldwater.

Hornick gift. Mrs. Lita Rothbard Hornick (A.B., 1948, B.; A.M., 1949; Ph.D., 1958), noted publisher, editor, and literary critic, has established a collection of her papers and those of Kulchur Press, *Kulchur* magazine, and The Kulchur Foundation, all of which she directed. Mrs. Hornick published the work of the New American writers (including those of the New York School) and avant-garde critics and artists, such as Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, and Larry Rivers; the collection of papers contains correspondence, manuscripts, proofs, and art work, dating from the 1960s and the 1970s, relating to their books, as well as those by Ted Berrigan, Joe Brainard, Charles Henri Ford, LeRoi Jones (Imamu Amiri Baraka), Gerard Malanga, and Ron Padgett, among others. In addition, Mrs. Hornick's gift contains letters and manuscripts of numerous other poets and artists, such as John Ashberry, John Cage, Robert Creeley, Salvador Dali, Kenneth Koch, Denise Levertov, Michael McClure, James Merrill, Robert Motherwell, Charles Olson, Gary Snyder, Andy Warhol, and Louis Zukovsky. There are also manuscripts of Mrs. Hornick's own publications, including her book of poems *Night Flight*, her autobiography *Kulchur Queen*, and her studies of Dorothy M. Richardson and Dylan Thomas.

Lamont gift. Dr. Corliss Lamont (Ph.D., 1932) has presented the file of letters that he received from Judith Masfield from 1984 until shortly before her death on March 1, 1988. In the correspondence, numbering some eleven letters from the poet's daughter as well as twenty-five copies of replies and related correspondence, Judith

Masefield discusses personal and family matters, memories of her distinguished father, recollections of life during the First World War, and the publication of her father's *Letters from the Front*, among numerous other subjects.



Lita Hornick at a Gotham Book Mart reception. (Hornick gift)

Pratt gift. Dr. Dallas Pratt (M.D., 1941) has presented the collection of papers and printed materials relating to the theatre of Robert Wilson that he has assembled over the years. The nearly two hundred items include typescripts of scenarios, programs, news releases, and photographs of the Wilson productions from the 1969 *The King of Spain* to the recent stagings of *the CIVIL warS*. Of special importance in Dr. Pratt's gift is the group of thirteen letters from Wilson in which he writes of his current theatre projects, designs for specific productions, and travels, and of the work of the Byrd Hoffman Foundation.

Rotenberg and Stern gift. Dr. Leona Rostenberg (A.M., 1933; Ph.D., 1973) and Ms. Madeleine B. Stern (A.B., 1932, B.; A.M., 1934)

have donated the typescript, notes, and proofs for the recently published, updated version of their *Old & Rare: Forty Years in the Book Business*.

Rothkopf gift. A group of twenty-two first editions of modern American literature, many of which are inscribed to Marguerite and Louis Henry Cohn, has been presented by Mrs. Carol Z. Rothkopf (A.M., 1952) for addition to the House of Books Collection. Especially notable are: Richard Curle, *Into the East*, London, 1923, one of 125 large paper copies, inscribed with a note concerning Joseph Conrad's preface; John Dos Passos, *Orient Express*, New York, 1927, with illustrations by the author, inscribed to Louis Cohn; Marianne Moore, *Occasionem cognosce*, Lunenburg, Vermont, 1963, one of 175 signed copies, inscribed to Marguerite Cohn; and Gertrude Stein, *Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded*, Paris, 1931, one of 100 signed copies. Among the seven books by Thomas Wolfe in Mrs. Rothkopf's gift are exceptionally fine copies of the rare first English and first German editions of *Look Homeward, Angel*, published in 1930 and 1932, respectively.

Saffron gift. A group of first and rare editions has been presented by Dr. Morris H. Saffron (A.B., 1925; A.M., 1949; Ph.D., 1968), including works by Thomas Bewick, Sir Thomas Browne, William Combe, Dorothy Sayers, and S. S. Van Dine. Of special importance are the fine copy of *The Florence Miscellany*, one of forty copies printed in Florence in 1785 for presentation, comprising poems written by Mrs. Piozzi, Bertie Greatheed, Robert Merry, and William Parson during their residence at Florence; and three stout folio scrapbooks, entitled *Berwickiana*, compiled in 1861, containing cuttings of more than three thousand wood engravings by Thomas Bewick and his pupils, John Bewick, Charlton Nesbit, Luke Clennell, William Harvey, and others.

Severinghaus estate gift. The estate of the late J. Walter Severinghaus, through the courtesy of his widow Mrs. Helen C. Severinghaus, has donated a collection of first editions, autograph letters, and portrait

engravings collected by Mr. Severinghaus's uncle, the late Willard L. Severinghaus (Ph.D., 1914), who taught at the University from 1907 and was Professor of Physics from 1919 until his retirement in 1941. Included in the gift are a number of textbooks used by Professor Severinghaus, an eighteenth-century edition of Isaac Newton's *Prin-*



Thomas Bewick woodcut from Robert Bloomfield's *Farmer Boy*, 1815. (Saffron gift)

cipia Mathematica published in Geneva, and several autograph letters, including an important letter written in 1706 by Richard Bentley, classical scholar and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, to Professor Henry Sike, also of Trinity College, in which he discusses various publications by himself, Professor Roger Cotes, and Sir Isaac Newton.

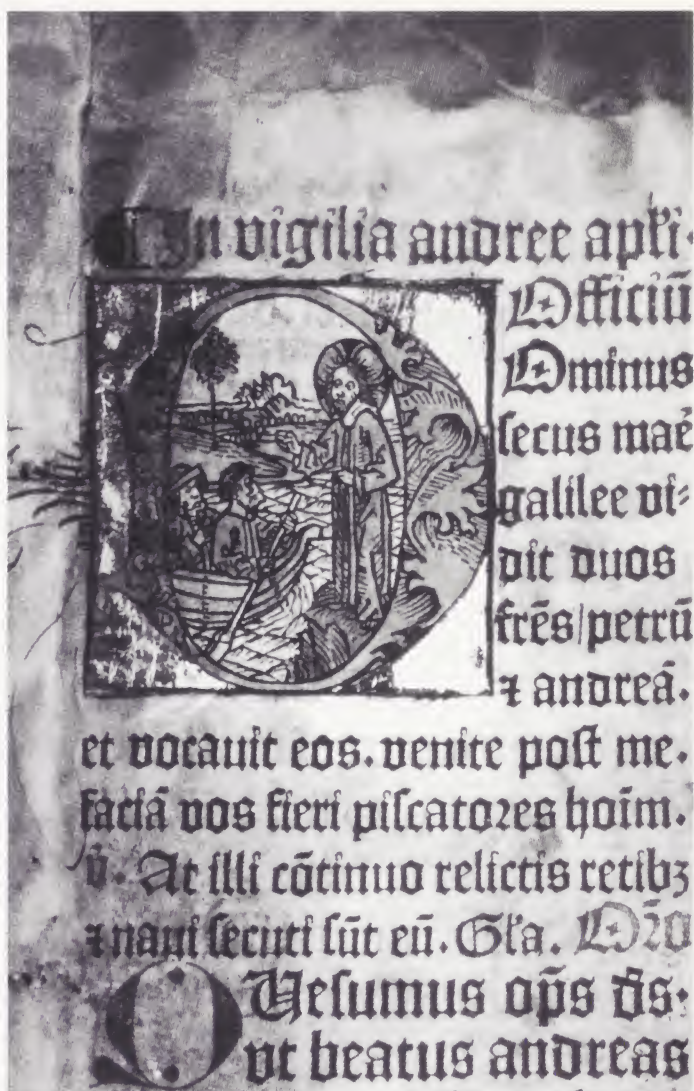
Steegmuller gift. A group of eleven first editions by and about the nineteenth-century American art critic and author of travel books, James Jackson Jarves, has been donated by Mr. Francis Steegmuller (A.B., 1927; A.M., 1928). Included are well-known works which

grew out of his extensive travels, such as *Italian Sights and Papal Principles Seen through American Spectacles*, 1856, *Italian Rambles*, 1883, *Art Thoughts: The Experiences and Observations of an American Amateur in Europe*, 1869, and *A Glimpse of the Art of Japan*, 1876.

Trilling gift. Mrs. Diana Trilling has presented, for inclusion in the Lionel Trilling Papers, Professor Trilling's correspondence with various editors at The Viking Press pertaining to the editing and publishing of his critical works and literary essays, as well as his novel *The Middle of the Journey*. There are 187 letters written from 1943 to 1974 by Professor Trilling to editors and publishers Marshall Best, Benjamin W. Huebsch, Pascal Covici, Elizabeth Sifton, and Alan D. Williams, among others, and related correspondence from Frank Kermode, Freda Kirchway, Amy Loveman, Marianne Moore, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Frederick J. Warburg, Edward Weeks, and Ray B. West.

Wilson gift. Mr. Robert M. Wilson, the noted artist and theatrical performer and director, has established, through the Byrd Hoffman Foundation, Inc., a collection of his papers with the initial gift of approximately 10,000 outlines, scripts, production notes, technical material, storyboards, posters, programs, announcements, and reviews, which document his productions from the late 1960s to the recent staging of his *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien* by the Paris Opera Ballet. Represented in the collection are files pertaining to such early Wilson works as *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, 1969, *Deafman Glance*, 1970, *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, 1974, *Einstein on the Beach*, 1976, and *Death Destruction and Detroit*, 1979; Wilson's more recent theatre work is represented by papers relating to his massive epic, *the CIVIL warS*. All aspects of Wilson's theatrical endeavors as author, designer, and director of theatre works, opera, and film in the United States and western European countries are represented in the collection.

Woodring gift. Professor Carl Woodring has established a collection of his papers with the gift of approximately 9,200 letters, manuscripts, notes, and printed materials relating to his teaching and research activities for the past three decades. The bulk of the papers presented pertain to his editing of Samuel T. Coleridge's *Table Talk* for *The Collected Works of Coleridge*, and the remainder concern his teaching career and professional activities. In addition to the manuscript material, there are nearly two hundred books inscribed to Professor Woodring by his colleagues and former students.



Missale Aboense

In honor of the 500th anniversary of the first book printed for Finland, the *Missale Aboense*, printed in Lübeck in 1488, the Jyväskylä University Library lent their copy, a leaf of which is illustrated above, for exhibition in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library from September 29 through October 10.

Activities of the Friends

Finances. General purpose contributions for the twelve-month period ended on June 30, 1988, totaled \$34,355. In addition, special purpose gifts, designated for book and manuscript purchases and for the establishment of new endowments, amounted to \$61,787. The appraised value of gifts in kind for the same period was \$426,054, a record amount. The total of all gifts and contributions since the establishment of the Friends in 1951 now stands at \$7,304,031.

Fall reception. The exhibition, "Dreams and Images: The Theatre of Robert Wilson," will open with a reception in the Kempner Exhibition Room on Wednesday afternoon, December 7, from 5 to 7 p.m. On display will be a selection of posters and manuscripts from the Wilson Papers donated by Mr. Wilson and Dr. Dallas Pratt, and artworks lent by the artist.

New Council members. Messrs. Carter Burden and Martin Meisel have been elected to serve on the Council of the Friends as members of the Class of '91, and Mrs. Chantal Hodges as a member of the Class of '90.

Future meetings. "The Fugitive Kind: The Theatre of Tennessee Williams" will open with a members' preview on Wednesday afternoon, March 1, 1989, in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library; and the annual Bancroft Awards Dinner will be held in the Rotunda of Low Memorial Library on Wednesday evening, April 5, 1989.

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